

CONGRESSMAN SHERWOOD BOEHLERT (R-NY)
OPENING STATEMENT FOR EDUCATION HEARING
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I want to welcome everyone here this morning to what I think is an historic hearing. Never before have all the primary federal agencies with responsibility for science and math education appeared together before the Congress.

We wanted to bring these five agencies together publicly to make a few key points. First, all five of these agencies have important roles to play in K-12 science and math education. Second, they each need to design their programs by drawing on their unique strengths and resources; we need not, and indeed should not, have a single, monolithic way of approaching education. And third, while we need a multiplicity of programs, those efforts need to be coordinated.

Coordination doesn't mean that every program has to fit a single mold, and coordination doesn't mean that agencies should not have some overlapping efforts. As with research funding, a strength of our system is that more than one agency may be working in a field. But coordination does mean that any overlap should be intentional and justified and that agencies should be drawing on each other's expertise and experiences.

Moreover, every agency must be evaluating its programs, and must share both the evaluation methods and results, so that we can continue to improve both the way programs are evaluated and the evaluations themselves.

What the Committee is going to want to hear today is how each agency views its role in K-12 science and math education, how it coordinates that role with others, and how it evaluates its programs.

The Committee will be keenly interested in your answers because every single one of us believes that K-12 science and math education is the ultimate key to our future prosperity and strength as a nation. As the National Academy pointed out in its report *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, improvement of K-12 education needs to be the keystone of an innovation agenda.

Over the next two months, this Committee will develop and report out legislation designed to enhance our nation's efforts in this area. Mr. Gordon has already introduced legislation, as I'm sure he will point out, and we will be doing so as well. I think Mr. Gordon and I are in complete agreement that a focus of that legislation needs to be doing a better job of attracting more top science students and math into teaching and enhancing the knowledge of current teachers in those areas.

I think there are a number of current programs we need to expand that already do that, such as the Noyce Scholarship Program at the National Science Foundation (NSF). And I'm sure there are other examples of programs that could be expanded that we will hear about today. We don't have to reinvent the wheel, but we do need to be sure it can cover more ground.

One element of achieving that is, of course, ensuring that our education programs are adequately funded, and I would just note now what I've said before: this Committee is committed to seeking better funding for NSF's education programs. They are underfunded in what in most other ways is a very bold and forward-looking fiscal 2007 budget proposal for science and math.

I know the Administration shares our commitment to revitalizing science and math education. But it will take some more money and some more ideas beyond what the Administration has suggested. And I look forward to working with all of our witnesses today to build on the excellent foundation the President has provided.

I hope this will not be the last time that all of you appear before us together because we need to work as a team to pursue a coordinated, yet pluralistic approach to education to ensure our nation's future success.

Mr. Gordon.